

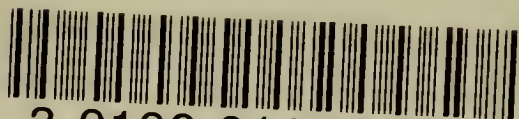
Comfort
in the
Home

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Comfort in the Home.

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Comfort in the Home

by M : J : Loftie
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A Modern Writer on Art says,
"Nothing that is worth learning
can be taught." There is
much truth in this remark. A man cannot
be "taught" to be a poet, or an
artist, or an inventor, or an actor, or an
orator. In the same way no one can
"teach" a girl to be a good servant, or
a first-rate cook, or parlourmaid, or
milliner. Anything that is "worth
learning" must be inborn or self taught.
The best of mistresses cannot "teach":—

A sloven orderliness

A forgetter memory

A gossip reticence

A dawdler energy, &c.

How rarely after twenty is anyone's character made different, except by the influence of love, sorrow or religion.

One of the most learned and accomplished men of this century, J. R. Green, the Author of "A Short History of England," gave directions that on his tombstone should be engraved: "He died learning." The great aim of a large percentage of servants seems to be "to live ignorant." It is a very good plan early in life to make a resolution not to go to sleep any night without asking, "What have I learned to-day?" and if the answer is "Nothing," then to commit to memory a verse of poetry or a text. Everyone should know how to cook, sew, wash, iron, and use a few simple carpenter's tools without breaking them or injuring themselves. Servants, as a rule,

are quite proud of not knowing each other's business. This is not wise: first, because in a small household the work has sometimes to be exchanged—on Sundays for instance. Second, because it often happens that a cook finds the kitchen fire trying and wishes to be a housemaid, or the house-parlourmaid cannot stand the stairs and wishes to be a cook. “Can do is easily carried about.” “Knowledge is power.”

The habits formed during a girl's first year of service are of great importance. They often stick to her for life, be they bad or good. It is, therefore, very desirable that she should start well. In her first place the china, furniture, carpets and paint, may be so shabby that she does not think them worth taking care of, but in her second place they

may all be valuable, and if she has acquired rough and careless ways, in a few days she may do pounds' worth of damage and besides lose a good place. Shabby things require particular care, because the people to whom they belong cannot afford to renew them. Poverty is no crime, but heedless destruction is a distinct sin.

The comfort of life depends a great deal on "little things." The sea is made of drops; happiness of mutual small kindnesses.

The following suggestions may, perhaps, be of some use to girls anxious to perfect themselves in the honourable profession of domestic service.

Comfort in the Home.



Good Servants.



There are two sorts of good servants :

First. — Those who do their work well, out of respect to themselves and duty, namely : “A fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage.” What we may call household machines. They are most valuable in large establishments, but in small ones often lack the kindness needed to smooth the little difficulties which often

arise, as in the case of sickness, moving house, unexpected visitors, or anything which breaks the usual routine of their work.

Second.—Those who take an interest in their employers, and feel a pride and pleasure in making the best of everything they have under their charge ; acting as if they were one of the family. This class are not machines, they are friends, and cannot be too highly valued.

All work is hard when done without affection, but it is easy to serve people we like. Work is then not slavery but willing service.



Thoughtfulness.



Thoughtfulness is a Savings Bank, but it saves more than money. It saves :

Time.

Health.

Temper.

Fatigue.

Change.

Sending out messages.

Ringling of bells.

Writing letters.

Do not go either up or down stairs empty handed. If you have nothing of your own to carry, you can oblige a fellow servant or save a delicate one a journey.



Memory.



A good memory is one of the most valuable gifts with which we can start in life. Like Thoughtfulness, it is a Savings Bank, and much more valuable than money, for money cannot buy it. "It slipped my memory" is the excuse of a useless servant.

After a month in a place a good servant ought to be ashamed of being asked for anything she knows is always required, such as water, coals, clean boots

and shoes, matches, soap, &c. She will visit the bedrooms at intervals and empty the basins, close the windows if a shower comes, see that the hot water is *really* hot, that slippers are beside the beds, &c., &c. In a well regulated house you rarely hear any bell but that of the hall door, whilst in a slovenly one the bells seem jangling all day long.



“Eyes and No Eyes.”



THIS is the title of a very useful little book, shewing how having eyes one may yet not have the full use of them. Most of us have looked with wonder at the marvellous feats of a conjurer. One of the most celebrated men in the profession commenced his son's education by sending him running fast down a street of shops and back again, then making a list of what articles in the windows the boy could remember. Each day he seemed able to notice twice as many as the day before, until, at length, at a glance he could in five seconds see more than most people could in a minute. After this eye training came the hand training—how to be quick

and deft in all his movements, not to break, or let things fall.

Rapid observation is most valuable to a servant, particularly to a parlourmaid. At a glance she can sweep the table, and so does not offer what is not wanted nor neglect to hand what is required. The housemaid, when coming into a room, in a moment sees if a chair has to be put straight, the blinds drawn up or down, the fire mended, a used glass or cup taken away. In a cook, educated sight is invaluable, for she can then at once detect when any dish is going wrong.

Take notice of anything you see well done, so as to be able to imitate it, such as a neatly put-up parcel, a clever way of folding a napkin, a pretty arrangement of flowers or dessert, a dainty way of ornamenting a salad, &c.

Manners.



The saying of a great philosopher is often quoted :

“Manners maketh the Man.”

History proves the truth of this saying. A few very talented men have attained greatness in spite of bad manners, but hundreds more owe their advancement in life to “good” manners.

Really good manners can only come from the heart, but a fair imitation can be

gradually turned into a habit, so as not to appear artificial.

The Bible definition of good manners is perhaps the best working theory, and is: "Let each esteem others better than themselves." This feeling will prevent rude speeches and disobliging ways. What is called "independence" is a savage instinct to protect one's self from being made into a slave. Gentlefolk, now-a-days, do not want slaves. They only want intelligent servants to do the work which must be done in order that life may be civilized, not the existence of savages.

Choose shoes which do not creak or have wooden heels. It is quite easy to learn to slip about softly instead of "stumping," you will also find that it tires your feet less, particularly going up and down stairs.

If your employers call you into a room to speak to you, come forward near to them. Do not stand holding the door as if eager to escape or unwilling to listen.

Cultivate the habit of handing things politely, not throwing them at people. Set down trays gently, without clatter. Empty water quietly. Never carry things up and down stairs rattling. Make no noises you can possibly help.

Try and seem pleased to do anything you are asked. It is very painful for nice people to accept unwilling service. They prefer to serve themselves or do without service.

There is no merit in doing things how you please instead of in the manner your employers approve of. After all, the house belongs to them and they are quite en-

titled to have their own ideas, even if yours are more sensible. Because their ways seem to you absurd is no reason for not conforming to their fads and fancies. Nearly everyone has eccentricities and, if they are harmless, those whom they pay to serve them should cheerfully and kindly try to gratify their whims.



Time.



There is an old saying about eating fruit :
that it is—

Gold in the morning

Silver at noon

Lead at night.

The same axiom holds good of time in
housework.

To dawdle away half-an-hour in the morning is bad economy. You never saw a first-rate servant take long over her breakfast. She knows the value of every minute before noon, and so obtains time to do little extra things before her dinner, and thus have an uninterrupted afternoon.



“Think.”



Don't "think!" "*Know!*" It is very provoking to have a person who comes on business turned from the door because the parlourmaid "thought" her master had not returned, but did not take the trouble to *know*. Not taking sufficient interest to "find out" causes a great deal of unnecessary discomfort in a house.

You "think" a bill has been paid, but why not keep the receipt? You "think" the kitchen chimney was swept about a

month ago, but why not keep a record of the date? You “think” a bed is aired—that a parcel has been sent up stairs—that the water for tea-making was really boiling—that the larder door is shut—that the baby’s bottle is clean, &c., &c. These sort of “thinks” are worse than useless, they are misleading.



Waste.



It has been stated by a man who ought to know, that the waste of servants in London alone, would supply food to all the hospitals and workhouses within the metropolitan area.

The poorer the home from which a girl comes the more extravagant she generally is.

Any servant, merely by thoughtfulness, can save at least a pound a year to

her employers. Cooks in large houses as much as £100.

It has often been said that a gentleman with a small income has his house more economically kept if he marries a duke's daughter than if he marries a servant. This is principally because most servants consider "economy" another word for "meanness," whereas it is only the thrifty who can afford to be generous.

A conscientious person is more careful of other people's money, time, furniture, food, &c., than she would be of her own possessions; she thinks waste quite as much dishonesty as stealing; carelessness as bad as waste.

She is more distressed at breaking what is not her own than if it were, and

cannot forgive herself for spoiling things which do not belong to her. She will not see, without remonstrance, wastefulness which she might prevent.

Do not despise little economies, such as lowering the gas or lamp when not wanted, keeping old rags for lamps and knives, using paper to save dusters, &c.





Dust Bins.



It is a standing puzzle to most house-keepers why servants are so anxious to put everything which they do not happen to want at the moment, or of which they do not know the use, into the dust bin. This pernicious habit arises partly, perhaps, from having been brought up in over-crowded rooms, where there was no space for the tidy little stores which every house ought to contain. Dust sifters know to their benefit how many things that are of use find their way to the dust-

man's cart. The dust bin is for ashes, anything wet that cannot be burned should be put in a pail. Paper to be destroyed in a sack. A properly attended to dust bin never smells, even in hot weather; but how often, standing at the door of a house, a sickly and most unwholesome smell comes from the basement, spreading disease germs and causing illness.



Tidyness.



If anything has a distinct place put it there, but if you don't know where to put it, leave it where it is that it may be found by the owner. Don't remove an open book in the day time, but if open in the morning when you are cleaning the room, put a piece of paper in as a mark and close it.

Putting things out of sight by way of "tidying" is an aggravating vice. If you indulge in it you must remember where you have put everything and justify the proverb, "Hiders are finders."



Little Niceties of Service.



In going out of a room where people are sitting, leave the door *exactly* as you found it—shut, wide open, or partly so ; unless you ask if they wish it otherwise.

Always keep the door of a room shut when you are “doing” it and making a noise, particularly the pantry door. Don’t burst into a room if anyone is asleep, or an invalid. When you have gently turned the handle hold it till you have opened the door, then hold the other handle without letting the bolt slip and you can shut the door again without making any noise.

Try and make everything look its best. When dusting pieces of old china don't arrange them so as to show the cracks.

If there is a stain or a darn on a tablecloth put something on the place to hide it.

In putting up curtains place the best side towards the light.

Nothing in a house should be in a "wisp," whether clean or dirty. Everything should be hung up or folded up. Soiled clothes should be folded when put in the clothes basket and neatly rolled up when sent to the wash. A washerwoman is more careful of articles when she finds their owners are neat and methodical. Dusters should be folded when done with. Paper when taken from parcels smoothed

out and put away flat. String rolled round and tied up to keep it from ravelling into knots.

Don't feed animals on the best plates. Have utensils kept specially for their use. A plate or saucer on the floor is very likely to get kicked and broken, particularly if put out into the yard on stone or brick.

Dirty boots and shoes should be collected from all the rooms at night. If they are wet they should be put, not too near the kitchen stove, but where they may gently dry—the soles turned uppermost. When there are only two servants and no boy, a wise cook tries to get her boots cleaned at night.

Never brush clothes in the kitchen. It is disgusting to have the filth of the streets blown over one's food.

Before taking clothes to be brushed see that the pockets have been emptied. If you find anything forgotten in the pockets place it on the dressing table of the person to whom the clothes belong.

In laying a tray put the handles of everything to the right, and arrange all the things so as to be in the most convenient places for use.

In putting a lamp beside anyone, particularly if they are lying down, see that the handle is placed so that they can raise or lower it, or put it out without having first to turn the lamp round.

KeeP the tops of ink bottles free from old caked ink—but not with your dusters. Store some old blotting paper or useless rags for the purpose.

Do not fill the ink bottles full enough to wet the lids. Fill them over the coal scuttle, so that if any ink is spilt it will not do any harm.

When leaving a room in the middle of cleaning it, put your dustpan, brushes, and dusters together under a chair or sofa, not where some one coming into the room may trip over them. Never leave your dustpan on the stairs "just for a minute." That "minute" may cause some one an awkward tumble.

Do not drag furniture about more than you can help. What you cannot lift altogether you can ease in moving by taking some part of it off the ground or ask a fellow servant to give you a hand.

If you are obliged to stand on an upholstered chair, first put on it a piece of

paper or a duster. Do not stand *at all* on chairs or sofas with springs.

If using a ladder against paper or paint, throw a duster over the top where it rests and pin securely so that it may not make a mark.

Do not "throw" windows up ; push them up gently, so that the cords do not get worn or the weights loosened. It is expensive and spoils the paint to have them renewed.

Window cords will last twenty years if carefully used ; not more than three if the windows are flung up or banged down.

After you have dusted your room, look round to see if there is any picture or other hanging thing that has got crooked and straighten it. "Straight" eyes are

invaluable, but can only be acquired by practice.

Always tell at once about anything you have broken and do not throw away the pieces, as they may be wanted in order to get the article matched or mended.

If you have stained or injured anything, speak of it betimes. An injury can sometimes be repaired at once, but not if neglected too long.

In drawing curtains, particularly bedroom ones, be sure to carefully lap them over in the middle and close at the sides, so that in the morning streaks of light may not appear.

If anything goes wrong, or something is forgotten, make an apology whether it is your fault or that of somebody else.

Politeness should induce one to express regret for any mishap, whether one cares or not.

Attend to a bell *at once*. If it has to be rung a second time make some excuse to show that you know you have been remiss.

If the name of another servant is called, answer, to see if you can do what is required.

Never throw things away without asking the person to whom they belong whether they are of any use. An ignorant person would pitch away a diamond, thinking it was a pebble, if they saw it as it comes from the mine.

Take a good look at your dustpans and waste-paper basket before you empty

them, as sometimes stamps and other things get in by mistake.

Try not to knock things together. If of china, it chips or cracks. If of metal, it dents them. If of wood, it makes a mark. If painted, it cracks off the paint.

Do not spill water when carrying cans up and down stairs, but if you accidentally do so, wipe up the spill *at once* and rub the place dry.

Take care not to let things drop, particularly silver.

If washing china ornaments, do so on the floor, in order that if they should slip they cannot fall far, so are not likely to get cracked or broken.

If an antimacassar is crushed, fold it up at night and put some weight on it and

it will look quite respectable in the morning. If very wrinkled it will require to be damped.

Be very careful about not letting doors bang, particularly in summer when the outside doors or windows are open.

In fine weather, when the family go out, open the windows, particularly on the staircase, so that the house may feel fresh when they come in from the open air. If they are out in the evening leave a staircase window open, so that the house may not feel stuffy when they return.

A nice old lady of the last generation used to say she knew in a strange house what sort of servant the housemaid was by looking at the setting of the bed-room candles. If you could lift the candle without the candle-stick dropping, and if

the clean paper setting did not show, she recognised a thoroughly good servant, and curiously enough she was scarcely ever wrong.

When any of the family goes away, at once cover up their bed-room. Take off the toilet cover, place all the things about the room on one table. Double back the mattress, fold up the bed clothes and cover with a clean dusting sheet. An unused room can be made to look quite orderly, and does not take so long to "put straight" when arranged thus. There should always be a hot bottle put in the bed when next used if the mattresses have not been aired at a fire.





Day Out.



If you have been out for a holiday, see when you return that your work has been done. You cannot expect a fellow-servant to attend to little things about which perhaps *you* only know, and about which you forget to tell her. Take care that your absence does not cause any discomfort ; that no one should suffer for your pleasure ; that you should not be grudged your “ day out ” because your duties have been neglected.

Most mistresses like their servants to have a holiday, but it is not everyone who is willing to be made uncomfortable in consequence.



“Old Maidish.”



It is a great compliment to be called “old maidish,” for that intended sneer generally means that a woman is tidy, orderly, saving, discreet. Not a flirt, not fond of gay dressing ; self-respecting and respecting others as she does herself. Many a man who has married the opposite kind of girl longs that his wife and the mother of his children could deserve the epithet of “old maidish.” Many a boy with unmended clothes and missing buttons wishes his mother was “old maidish.” In any house an “old maidish” servant is a treasure worth her weight in gold.



“Tell; Tale.”



To be called by fellow servants a “tell-tale” is also a compliment. It means that you will not allow those who provide you with a home and wages to be cheated or wronged without warning them. A servant’s duty is *first* towards her master or mistress; to be loyal and true to those who stand for the time-being in the place of her parents—the head of her home. To see them robbed or their rules disobeyed, *silently*, is a crime. If a servant finds herself in a dishonest or disorderly household, she has but two honourable

alternatives—to tell, or to leave, and in leaving to tell why she leaves. This may seem placing a servant in a position of great difficulty, but duty *done* is never without its reward. It may not be at the moment but it will follow in the long run. Honesty has never yet been proved to be the “worst policy.”



“Meanness.”



To be called mean is also often a compliment. When a girl has low wages and wants either to put something in the savings bank or to help her parents, she has not any pocket money if she dresses neatly and has good caps, shoes, and aprons ; she is therefore obliged to refuse to spend what she cannot afford, and is in consequence called “mean” by her fellow-servants.





Lighting a Fire.



In laying a fire consider two things :

First : What sort of a day is it ?

Very cold ?

Rather cold ?

Mild ?

Almost too warm to light a
fire at all ?

Second : Is the fire wanted ?

Immediately ?

In about an hour ?

For a short time ?

For all day ?

To keep in all night ?

“At Once.”

A bed-room fire in the morning is wanted *at once*. It is worth while, at night, to split up very thin a few pieces of firewood for the morning.

Lay some small pieces of coal at the bottom of the grate.

Be extravagant of sticks.

Use very few, if any, cinders.

Only small bits of coal, and not much.

Plenty of air-holes to let the fire burn up.

Use the sticks like the wick of a candle.

Be sure they cannot fall out through the bars.

In seven minutes the fire should, if properly built, be clear and bright.

“For all Day.”

Lay good-sized pieces of coal at the bottom and sides of the grate. This will

make the fire burn clean and without ashes for several hours ; over the sticks put small pieces of coal, and over them the cinders, and then one or two more pieces of larger coal. Build compact and close to last long without mending.





Mending Fires.



Intelligence should be used in mending a fire as well as in lighting it. The state of the weather considered, and also when the fire is wanted.

In the dining-room, bright, but not a furnace, at meal times ; mended with small coal after luncheon ; stirred up an hour before dinner. Only a small clear fire at dinner, as then it can go out. When a housemaid is much pressed for time in the morning she will find it a very good plan to lay the dining-room fire

before she goes to bed, particularly on Saturday to save Sunday work.

When you know the family are to be out for some hours, mend with small coal or use up your cinders.

Do not poke a fire which has a brick back. You are sure to crack it sooner or later. Coals should be broken by a blow from the side of the poker and arranged with the tongs.

Stirring a fire is quite a different thing from using your poker as if it were a sword to thrust with.

Pick off the coals when a fire has ceased to be wanted and put them on the hob or hearth.

Emptying coals makes a good deal of dust, therefore bring up the coals to a room before you have dusted it.

If some one is coming in late, when you are going to bed put some large coals on the fire. Large coal keeps in best and gives a nice blaze when stirred up.

In filling scuttles keep the medium sized pieces for the grates that have least draught and use up the smaller coal in the rooms where the fire burns well.

In every bed-room, where there is a fire, a few sticks should be left in case it gets too low or goes out. This will save you many a journey and enable anyone sitting in the room to light up the fire for themselves.





Lamps.



Before bringing up the lamps wipe them well; they always “sweat” between the time they are trimmed in the morning and are wanted in the evening.

If the chimneys are smoked clean them with some soft paper, which throw away, so as not to soil your cloths. Soft paper is an excellent thing to polish chimneys with.

All the burners should be taken off once a week and thoroughly cleaned.

Do not turn the lamps on full when first lighted. That chars the wicks. Never carry a lighted lamp fully turned up, for fear of cracking the chimney.

Do not wash the chimneys of lamps that have to be used the same day, but if obliged to do so use methyated spirit and a little chalk.

When you get new chimneys put them in a fish kettle with some paper or straw at the bottom. Bring the water to a boil, set aside and do not take the chimneys out until the water is cold. This helps to prevent them from cracking.

Blow lamps out, don't turn them down. Don't move immediately after putting out for a slight jar cracks the cooling chimney.

Do not leave lamps burning in a draught, the cold air cracks the chimneys.

A tiny piece should be cut off the corners of all flat wicks to prevent smoking.

When being trimmed, wiping is enough most days ; cutting is only required occasionally.

Lamp scissors should be kept quite bright and sharp, never hung up open, else rust gets between the blades.

Have a piece of paper to put underneath when cleaning lamps. Burn it at once if any oil has been spilled, so as to avoid making a smell. Everyone very much dislikes the smell of any kind of petroleum.

Many people prefer the lighting of the house done before it is dark enough to draw the curtains. If this be so, return to draw the curtains afterwards, as soon as the windows give no light.

Stand the lamps in the pantry for five minutes after they are lighted, half turned up. Keep the door shut so that the smell of the oil may not get through the house.



Silver.



Silver cannot be polished, as it ought to be, without having a good deal of time spent on it, but it can be kept bright and clean with a little intelligence and following a few simple rules such as :

Always rub off all sauce and food before you begin to wash. This saves the silver which has not been used for greasy things from getting greasy. When washed clean, soap well and pour on absolutely boiling water, drying whilst the articles are hot. Finish with chamois leather.

Be careful of anything with hinges, not to bend them back. A *broken* hinge cannot be mended. Old silver requires a particularly light hand so that it may not be put out of shape.

Keep spoons in your hand when polishing. If you rest them on the table you will bend either the bowls or the handles.

The old saying about cleaning a room, "Take care of the corners the middle will take care of itself, is always true and applies equally to silver. "If the handles are bright the bowls will brighten themselves."

It is no use trying to polish silver with a damp leather.

When laying silver on the table, all handles should have a rub so as to insure no finger marks being visible.

Do not wash silver in a greasy wooden tub.

If there is any quantity to be washed, do not put forks and spoons together. The spoons are scratched by the forks.





Brass.



The best way to clean brass is to *keep* it clean.

A little elbow grease every day and a thoroughly dry chamois is all that is required. Pastes and powders are abominations. They get into the cracks and corners and stick there. If the brass is moveable soap it well : then pour on absolutely boiling water ; dry, polish while hot with a chamois leather.

Have a circle cut in a piece of strong thick pasteboard to put over your brass

door handles when cleaning them, if they require more than the daily rub. This will save the paint. Have a piece cut out the size and shape of the knocker and then you will not be afraid to clean it well, and can do so much quicker than when trying to avoid touching the paint. The proper painting of a hall door is very expensive so every care should be taken of it.



To keep Rooms Clean in London.



Morning Cleaning.

First, the fire laid, then the chairs brushed and the dusting sheets put on again. Then the floors swept, the pictures and tables dusted and the dusting sheets kept on until the dust has well settled. All furniture covers in London should be rubbed with a clean duster every day ; brushing is not enough. Chintz will keep clean twice as long if rubbed every morning.

Mats ought to be taken outside and brushed well after being shaken.

The curtains should be taken down once a month, well brushed, and if there have been fogs rubbed with stale bread.

Carpets and polished floors should be gone over once a week with a linen cloth wrung out of *clean* water, and then rubbed quite dry. Stair carpets especially want this treatment.

Oil cloths should be washed once a week and finished with a little milk, rubbed quite dry, to give a polish ; or, better still, rubbed with a varnish after being washed and thoroughly dried. Soap melts the paint off oil cloth, a scrubbing brush scratches it off : leaving it wet will also soon destroy the surface.

The window sills, and as far as the windows open at the sides, should be swilled with water once a week. This prevents much dirt blowing in.

When, once a week, the stair rods are taken up to be cleaned, the carpets should be moved and brushed underneath so that the dust may not accumulate.

Furniture should be covered at night with dust sheets and the curtains taken from the floor. The table covers folded up.

Keep your eyes open during dusting so that you will see if anything has been left about—a purse, or a brooch, or gloves, card case, &c. Put such articles in some conspicuous place so that the owner may see and find them.

General Cleaning.

Whatever dirt a good housemaid may have to leave in a room from want of time will not be on the tops of furniture or behind wardrobes and drawers ; these she will clean first, before she begins the floor. She will have a holy horror of concealed dust and dirt.

The rail of the banisters wants polishing often. It is very disagreeable to feel it dirty and sticky as is always the case in an ill-kept house.

When dusting a tray full of things, the contents should be turned out on a piece of newspaper, not on the bare table or tablecloth. This, for three reasons : It makes less noise, does not scratch the table or soil the tablecloth, and the things do not roll away and get lost.

Pull out drawers occasionally to dust behind them. If they do not shut closely the front ledge wants dusting every day. If they do not slide easily, rub a little dry black lead where they stick.

When a room is being cleaned it should not look disorderly. It is quite as easy to cover up neatly as for all the things to be higgledy-piggledy. Nothing should be laid on chairs without a piece of paper or dust sheet underneath. No china placed on a bare table, because all old china is like a saw at the bottom.

The mahogany or other wood furniture should be well cleaned and rubbed once a week. Some boiled linseed oil and an equal part of methylated spirit is as good as anything, but must be thoroughly rubbed off.

Rooms properly kept do not require "turning out" more than twice a year. Gentlemen particularly dislike to have everything put topsy turvy merely for the housemaid to chase the dust from one place to another. If a mistress complains that a room is not clean she is generally told either that it was "turned out" a certain day last week or will be "turned out" a certain day next week. Suppose when the cook asked in the middle of the week what was for dinner in the servants' hall, the mistress should answer, "Oh, you had a roast on Sunday last and you will have another roast on Sunday next!"



The Making of Beds.



A great many people have fads as to how their beds should be made. Try and find out their wishes and remember them. There is one point on which everyone is agreed, and that is to have the under sheet smooth and tightly tucked all round so that there shall be no creases. This is almost impossible where the bad habit prevails of wrapping the bolster in the lower sheet, because the bolster is almost sure to slip down.

Many people like the upper sheet and blankets tucked only at the foot, be-

cause, if tucked at the sides, when turned down for the night the under sheet gets pulled loose.

In a single bed against the wall, you can tuck the wall side and turn the bed clothes back, for the night, corner wise.

Be sure you put the pillow and bolster fastenings towards the wall.

Kee*p* the largest blanket for the top. Remember to turn all bedding every day and to shake up pillows and bolster. Once a week every bed ought to have some hours airing. Uncover *it first* in the morning, set the mattress up or throw it over the rails, and the pillows on a chair. Then *this* bed can be made *last* and will thus be freshened. The clothes should be neatly placed where most convenient ; at the open windows if the weather is fine.

Lay out the bed linen required so that it may be put on the beds on Saturday morning. The table linen and towels ready for Sunday morning. The clean dusters, glass cloths, and kitchen towels to be exchanged on Monday morning for those brought up to go to the wash.

Many a person has lost his life from sleeping in damp sheets. You must remember the clothes require sufficient heat to make them steam. It is not enough to lay a lot at once on a horse before a dead-and-alive fire. They must be made hot, or they wont be properly aired, and carefully turned so that the heat shall reach all parts.





Needlework.



A good needlewoman is very particular in her choice of needles and thread, she considers :

Is the work intended for hard wear?

Is the mend in a place where the stitches will be seen?

Is the article to be washed or cleaned as it is, or is it to be ripped before washing or cleaning?

She does not sew on hooks and eyes with 80 cotton and hem with No. 24.

She mends gloves with the finest possible needle and silk, so as not to show the underneath white of the leather or make a hard ridge.

She considers what the fabric is in choosing what to darn it with, and if with wool, leaves enough at the ends for shrinking in washing.

If the article is new she spends time in a very neat darn, probably ravelling out some of the material so as to have the same substance and colour. If the article is old she darns thinly so as not to risk the darn being pulled from the fabric in washing. A thoughtful workwoman will in the same time do twice as much work, in a satisfactory manner, as a careless one.

If asked to "re-do" anything, imitate as nearly as possible the way it is done,

taking for granted that if any alteration were required you would have been told.

Linen, and indeed everything should be mended, except in the case of buttons, before it is sent to the wash. In washing, a small hole is made into a large one and a small tear into a big one, so it saves trouble in the long run to mend first.

There are several good ways of sewing on linen buttons. The best perhaps is a round of stitching about a quarter the size of the button. Another way is a star * A third is a button-holed bar across : the usual two or three stitches in the middle is useless and destructive, for when torn off by the laundress' iron the material underneath often comes away with the button. See that the buttons are of a right size, not large enough to burst the

button holes nor small enough to slip out. The cloth buttons on a man's clothes must (after being sewn on and that not too tightly) have the thread wrapped round the shank and then fastened off so that the end of the thread cannot get out. Never jerk off your thread, which means speedy ripping, but after fastening cut off with the scissors.

In "cutting out" measure twice with a tape measure before you use the scissors—three times if the material is not reversible. People often buy a remnant which cannot be matched and is just sufficient for the purpose required. If carelessly cut it becomes useless.

When ripping anything place a dust sheet or newspaper on the floor to catch the threads. This is a great saving of time

as bits of cotton are very hard to sweep out of a carpet.

When mending the clean linen, have a towel on the table to lay it on and one to throw over it if you have to leave it. All work should be covered up at night from the dust, and during the “doing” of the room in the morning.





Washing.



The horror most servants have of doing the smallest bit of washing is very incomprehensible ; they don't mind scrubbing out a room but scorn to wash a pocket-handkerchief. I remember saying to a parlour-maid, nearer forty than thirty, "I don't think the washerwoman uses good starch, for your aprons crackle like paper." She replied, with dignity, "I don't know anything about starch, I have never been required to do any washing." In a small and not rich household it is a great saving to have the antimacassars, muslin blinds, and coloured table covers done at home. London washerwomen ruin them, and cleaning is costly in a city where nothing keeps

clean long. With "Sunlight" soap and the sheets that are going to the wash to roll the things in and partially dry them, washing is not a hard task.

One of the best women I have ever known in any rank in life was Mary H., the "general" in a refined though poor household. The gentleman of the house had such a dislike to the sight of clothes hanging out to dry that he implored his wife that whatever economy she might have to practise, washing at home should not be one. The washing was "put out" for a year. Mary heard her mistress lamenting the cost and the destruction of the fabrics, so, with true kindness and devotion, she said, "Ma'am, if you will let me do the washing, and yourself iron the shirts, I will engage master shall never know it is done at home. He is away all

day, and I will never let the lines remain out in the garden." So Mary for eight years did the washing and never allowed her master to know of her good deeds. We do not know her way of washing, but the following method is the best for such a household. The washing can then be dovetailed in with the other work of the house.

"I put the clothes," says a wonderful old lady who does all the work of her house, "in cold water, and next day wring them out, then I spread them on a board, as if to iron them, rub them all over with *dry* soap (*never immerse* soap in water, as all servants *will* do, it dilutes its strength, making it slimy to the touch.) With your hands rub the clothes after spreading the soap, then pour hot water on a little soda, and wash them in it, wring them and then rinse them through *hot* water *without* soap,

which brings out much soil and soap. Again spread the clothes on a board, rub them over with cold water, soap, let them lie all night and then wash them through hot water with a little soda. Wring them and again rinse through hot water, then *cold*, and after putting them into blue water hang out to dry. The great secret is the long soaking in water and not over diluting the soap. Londoners will never use a sufficient *number* of waters, they like washing in what they call "*good stuff*," which means suds in which the dirt has been washed out of other *very dirty* things. In my way the linen never *smells* of soap, and not one-fourth of the *quantity* of soap is used."

I have received the advertisement of a laundry where they engage to use seven waters.

Making Good Tea.



To make bad tea is the easiest thing in the world. To make good tea is just as easy, but you must know how to do it. To make a cup of good tea requires a deftness which to the clumsy-fingered looks almost like juggling.

First of all you must have *really good tea*; cheap tea is always dear.

Not long ago I watched a neighbour on whom I called making tea. I wanted a good cup badly, but directly she began my spirits sank, for I knew that I

should be disappointed. She poured about a spoonful of hot water from the kettle into the teapot, which she immediately emptied into the slop basin. She was telling me a little story, and she paused in measuring out the tea until she had finished what she thought to be a funny point. I knew that my tea was spoilt, and I could see no fun in it. I need waste no more words over *bad* tea-making.

This is how *good* tea is made. Water that has been boiling some time, or that has been boiled up before, has all its freshness boiled out of it and will not make good tea. The kettle must contain fresh water, which directly it has boiled is at its best. While the kettle is boiling the tea is to be measured out into a cup.

The usual rule is a caddy-spoonful for each person and "one for the pot." A

more foolish rule was never made, for supposing you are making a single cup for yourself you get it, on this basis, strong enough to blow your head off. Following the same rule for two people the tea is not quite so strong, and so it goes on weakening. The quantity is a matter of judgment.

The tea being measured out, see that the teapot is perfectly clean, and has not even the suspicion of an old tea-leaf inside. Any moisture drain carefully out—*every drop*. Pour quite a breakfast-cupful of boiling water into the empty pot, which shake so as to diffuse the heat, and in something less than a minute quickly pour every drop of the contents into the slop-basin.

I say “into the slop basin” advisedly, because some people lose much valuable time in pouring the water from the heated

teapot into the bottoms of the cups, taking pains to apportion a fair and just measure to each. While doing this the teapot is cooling and the tea will certainly suffer. Tea if properly made is too hot to drink when first poured out, and therefore heating the cups is quite unnecessary.

The action of the opening of the lid, putting into the teapot the measured-out tea, and filling up with boiling water—holding the teapot close to the kettle—must be done almost in a flash.

Some people, after they have filled the teapot, bring it back to the teatray with the lid still open. *That thoughtless act jeopardises your tea.* The very moment you finish pouring in the hot water the lid must go down.

As to how long tea should stand, few people agree. My time is four minutes ; six minutes should I think be the very outside, otherwise the infusion becomes bitter and part of the delicious aroma is lost.

A cosy over the teapot is a matter for one's individual judgment. I never use one, for I think doing so brings out the coarser and more astringent part of the tea which is neither wholesome nor palatable.

If the tea is weakened down by watering, and more is required, don't attempt to bring up the strength by adding fresh tea to the pot. To do so is to waste your tea. Throw away the sloppy tea and make fresh.

Here is a hint which some day may prove useful. On an emergency the most delicious tea may be made in a saucepan, Australian bush fashion. Catch the water at the moment it is about boiling over, when drop in the tea. Stir it well and set aside. The leaves go straight to the bottom and remain there. Better tea than that thus prepared one could not wish to drink.



Making Good Coffee.



Most of the remarks about tea-making are equally applicable to coffee-making. The best coffee I ever drink is made by an artist on his studio stove. He has two fireproof china jugs. In one he puts the freshly roasted, freshly ground coffee, which he places on the stove to get hot. In the other he puts some boiling water to warm it. When the coffee is quite hot in goes the boiling water and a good stir is given to send the floating particles to the bottom. The water is now emptied out of the other jug and the coffee quickly poured from one jug to the other three

times, then the lid is put on and the jug returned to the stove to keep hot and settle.

Excellent coffee can be made with *one* jug set in a basin of hot water, but not quite so clear as with two jugs.

For making a large quantity of coffee a chocolate pot is better than an ordinary coffee pot because the spout is at the top. After the coffee is made you must pour out a cupful and throw it back again into the pot. When serving put a bit of muslin over the spout to catch any floating particles which may have remained at the top.







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